

## IN MEMORIAM

### A Tribute to Edward J. Beattie, Jr.

RICHARD J. COTE, MD\*

Department of Pathology, University of Southern California School of Medicine, Kenneth Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, Los Angeles, California

The world recently lost one of the giants in the fight against cancer. Edward J. Beattie, Jr., was an indefatigable crusader in the effort to understand and treat cancer. He devoted over 50 years of his life to what he termed “the cancer problem” as a physician, an investigator, an administrator, and a leader. He made landmark contributions to the surgical approach to cancer. Thus, it is most appropriate that his life and efforts are celebrated in this tribute in the *Journal of Surgical Oncology*.

The chronological facts of Ted Beattie’s life are remarkable. Born in Philadelphia in 1918, Ted graduated with honors from Princeton University and then went on to Harvard Medical School, where he graduated with honors in 1943. He then completed his residency in surgery at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, where he was the Harvey Cushing Research Fellow. After completing a fellowship in thoracic surgery at the George Washington University School of Medicine, he was immediately appointed chief of thoracic surgery at Gallinger Municipal Hospital and the Director of Surgical Research at George Washington University Hospital. While in Washington D.C., he had a number of appointments, including consultant in thoracic surgery at Walter Reed Hospital.

Ted then went to the University of Illinois, where he rose from assistant to full professor in 4 years, and was Chairman of the Department of Surgery for 11 years (having been appointed chairman a mere 6 years after completing his surgical training).

In 1965 he accepted the position as Chief of the Thoracic Service at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Clearly one of the leading cancer hospitals in the country, Memorial had fallen on difficult times. Ted’s leadership and vision were immediately recognized and he was quickly named Chairman of Surgery and then Chief Medical Officer of Memorial Hospital, a position he held for nearly 17 years, leading that institution to the position of preeminence it now enjoys.

Never satisfied, Ted, at a time when most of us might enjoy the pace of retirement, went on to become the Chief of Thoracic Surgery at the David B. Kriser Lung Cancer Center and helped to start the Beth Israel Medical

Center Cancer Center, where he was Medical Director until his death.

Those are only some of the facts. How do you take the measure of such a life? How should we remember the man?

Ted Beattie wanted to be remembered for two things: as a good teacher and as a good doctor to his patients.

As a teacher he was peerless. He trained a generation of the current leaders in thoracic surgery and surgical oncology. He clearly understood the need to accelerate the pace of clinical and scientific progress against cancer and supported research at all levels. He was particularly interested in the training of young physicians and scientists, who he always encouraged to pursue studies on the cancer problem. Indeed, this is how I first came to know Dr. Beattie. He clearly evidenced pleasure at the progress of his protégés and had the perspective to understand that even small advances might help, and in any event represented a change from the status quo.

Dr. Beattie was an outstanding doctor, a surgeon of international reputation, and a physician to the world’s political and business leaders. In his book *The Youngest Science*, the great Lewis Thomas described Ted Beattie as a “master surgeon” who had made great strides against lung cancer. There are many doctors who now labor against cancer and Ted Beattie remains a model; devoted to his patients, his goal was to try and attack their disease with all the tools of science and medicine at his disposal. He believed that physicians must be firmly scientifically grounded and have the necessary technical skills to approach problems in their specialties, but he also understood that any physician dealing with cancer needed to have a well-developed global view of the disease. As a surgeon, he realized that his role in patient care did not begin or end in the operating room, but was

\*Correspondence to: Richard J. Cote, MD, Department of Pathology, University of Southern California School of Medicine, Kenneth Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, 1441 Eastlake Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90033.

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a lifelong commitment. Dr. Beattie's patients were grateful to him—their devotion to him is legendary. Ted was also fully aware that the care of the cancer patient was a team process, and had to involve numerous professionals in a multidisciplinary team effort. This view led to his development of multidisciplinary care at Memorial Hospital.

Although engaged in a difficult specialty, surrounded by the latest technology, and burdened with the demands of running one of the world's most important cancer centers, he always tried to understand the human needs and concerns of his patients and their families, and credited his wife Nicole for helping him to maintain that human focus.

Ted had a well-developed sense of his capabilities, but also understood all of the elements that could help him fulfill his goals. This is well illustrated by a wonderful (and true) story from his early years. Ted was an accomplished football player at Princeton, in the days when Princeton had a nationally ranked football team. Obviously a gifted student, he applied to Harvard Medical School and interviewed there on a Saturday morning before the Harvard/Princeton game in Cambridge. During the interview, he was asked where else he had applied, to which he replied: "Only Harvard." Asked why only Harvard, he said: "Because it is the best." The interviewer (perhaps taken aback by this display of confidence) asked Ted why Harvard should take him. He said, "Because I am smart, I am hard working, I am a good student and because my father can afford to pay the tuition." He added, "If you don't take me, who are you going to take?"

Ted Beattie was a visionary. He clearly saw where the future lay in the fight against cancer, and was instrumental and in a position to translate this vision into action. He saw that science was the key to these efforts and was ever

supportive in fostering research and making it integral to patient care and teaching. He was tireless, both here and abroad, in educating the public about the preventable causes of cancer.

He recognized that as technology progressed, patients could be treated in ways less disruptive to their lives, and pioneered the concept of outpatient cancer care.

Now, at a time when the term "multidisciplinary care" is a catch phrase of disease management, it is easy to forget that this is actually a recent concept, first pioneered by Ted Beattie and his colleagues at Memorial Hospital. That process by which patient care is wholly integrated with all of the relevant medical and social disciplines is one of Dr. Beattie's greatest legacies.

Finally, the true measure of Ted Beattie was demonstrated in the way he faced his ultimate challenge, his own battle against cancer. Ever the activist, he was not philosophical about his lot and did not simply accept his fate. He approached his situation by mustering all of his considerable resources, and although he had a keen sense of the reality of the situation, he demonstrated great courage and was always positive and optimistic, just exactly as he had been with his own patients. He showed, in the most personal way, that his lifelong fight against cancer was more than an intellectual challenge, although it certainly was that. It was more than a pathway to personal advancement and fame, although he certainly achieved that. It was a pursuit that existed at the core of his being; it was what he deeply believed in and lived.

Death was not the end for Ted Beattie, for he lives through his students, his patients, his colleagues, as well as through the enormous good he achieved.

In losing Ted Beattie, cancer has won another battle. But Dr. Beattie did much, indeed dedicated his life, to ensure that we would have the resources, skills, and the environment finally to win the war against cancer.